

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD ON NOVEMBER 21, 1913.

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The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1914 was held in its office in the Lemon building, 1729 New York avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Friday, November 21, 1913. The following members were present:

Daniel C. French, Chairman;

Frederick Law Olmsted;

Thomas Hastings;

Cass Gilbert;

Charles Moore;

Edwin H. Blashfield;

Peirce Anderson;

also Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. Army, the Secretary and

Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 9:45 A. M., and proceeded at once to ~~the~~ business before it.

1. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting, held September 25, 1913, were presented and approved.
2. FINAL MODELS FOR GUILFORD C. H. MONUMENT, N. C.: The Chairman informed

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the commission that the Guilford Battle Ground Company had asked for an opinion upon the final models prepared by Mr. F. H. Packer, the sculptor, for the proposed Guilford C. H. battle monument. Upon motion the sculptor member of the commission (Mr. French) was appointed a committee, with power, to report to the Guilford C. H. Battle Ground Company in the matter.

Small sized models approved See files.

3. "TITANIC" MEMORIAL: The Secretary informed the Commission that Mrs. John Hays Hammond, Secretary of the Woman's "Titanic" Memorial, had submitted informally, for an expression of the Commission as to the best, eight different designs for a Titanic memorial which had been submitted to her. The Commission inspected these designs and found the one prepared by Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney of New York City to be the best. Mr. French was requested to convey this information to Mrs. Hammond verbally, and, in discussing the whole subject with her, to call her attention to former expressions of the Commission, recommending the direct selection of the artist to design and execute the memorial.

4. PEACE STATUE IN THE CANAL ZONE: Mr. French brought to the attention of the Commission a personal letter to him from Mr. Richard Bartholdt, member of Congress from Missouri, calling attention to a bill the latter has introduced in Congress providing for the erection of a colossal statue of Peace at some point in the Canal

Zone and suggesting the endorsement of the Commission regarding this project. Mr. French was requested to communicate informally with Mr. Bartholdt and inform him that, while the Commission wishes to do everything it consistently can, they fear that it might be considered that they are exceeding their authority in endorsing a bill in advance of its passage.

5. FINAL MODEL OF COMMODORE BARRY: The Commission accepted the recommendation of Mr. French that the final full-sized model (plaster model) of the figure of Commodore Barry, prepared by Mr. John J. Boyle, the sculptor, for the Barry monument, be approved.
6. SEA WALL ALONG RIVER FRONT IN VICINITY OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL: Colonel Harts, at the request of the Engineer Officer in charge of the United States Engineer Office in Washington, placed before the Commission a plan which showed the existing river front in the vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial site, and the proposed line for a sea wall to be built by the United States Engineer Office. He requested to be informed whether the line proposed to be followed under present plans of the Engineer Office (designated C - D on the plan) should be adhered to, or whether a new line also shown on the plan and extending into the river about 145 feet from the present shore line at the point of the 23d street sewer (designated A - E - D on the plan) should be taken as a new line for the proposed sea wall, stating that the Engineer Department are willing to adopt the new

line if this is found to be desirable. The Commission formally approved the new line

(Designated A - E - D). *See P B H files for correspondence.*

7. SITE AND DESIGN FOR MEADE MEMORIAL: The Commission, per appointment, at eleven o'clock met Mr. John McElroy, Editor of The National Tribune, and Mr. G. H. Slabaugh of the Grand Army of the Republic, both representing the Meade Memorial Commission, for a conference regarding the design and site for a proposed memorial to General George G. Meade. The committee stated that no active steps had been taken toward procuring a design for the memorial, but that the "committee on site" of the Meade Memorial Commission had expressed themselves in favor of a site upon the Union Station Plaza or in the new territory being acquired by the Government for park purposes in its vicinity. The Commission later informed Mr. McElroy that, in their opinion, it would be wise for the Meade Memorial Commission not to proceed with determining upon the design for the memorial, or to fix upon its exact location in the territory suggested and favored by them, until the Government has proceeded further in the development of plans for the treatment of that area. (See Exhibit A.)

8. DESIGNS FOR PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE BRIDGE: The Commission next considered a letter from the Commissioners of the District of Columbia requesting advice as to which of two designs submitted (one showing an arch bridge, and the other a girder bridge) should be

adopted for the proposed bridge across Rock Creek on the lines of Pennsylvania avenue. Mr. E. D. McComb, Engineer of Bridges for the District of Columbia, appeared before the Commission and explained in detail the proposed construction of each design. The Commission selected the arch design as the better, and so informed the District Commissioners. In view of the prominence of this bridge and its close relation to the development of Rock Creek which is now imminent, the Commission considered the architectural design of the bridge of very great importance and therefore also suggested to the Commissioners that an architect of recognized ability be employed to assist in the general designing of the bridge. (See Exhibit B).

9. PRELIMINARY DESIGNS FOR MERIDIAN HILL PARK: Colonel Harts, Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted to the Commission second preliminary designs for the treatment of Meridian Hill Park which were a development of earlier preliminary designs which had been previously submitted to the Commission and approved by them. Mr. Burnap, landscape architect of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, was called in consultation. The Commission inspected the designs and made various recommendations and suggestions which will be followed out in the further development of the designs. (Meridian Hill plans # 9, 6 & 4 P.B. & G.)

(Harrison Hotel - 1000 10th St. N.W.)

10. HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS ALONG SEVENTEENTH STREET, NW: The Secretary next placed before the Commission a letter from the Commissioners of the District of Columbia in which they requested the advice of the Commission regarding the height to which buildings can be erected on the west side of 17th street, NW., between New York avenue and F street, adjacent to the State, War, and Navy Department building. After an inspection of the site later in the day the Commission agreed with the District Commissioners that this height should be limited to eighty feet.

In transmitting this opinion to the District Commissioners the Secretary was also directed to state that it appears desirable to the Commission that a schedule be prepared regulating the height of buildings on Pennsylvania avenue and 15th street as well as on 17th street; that it would be of advantage, not only to the future appearance of the city but also to the real estate interests involved, if such schedules should be worked out for all blocks adjacent to public buildings and grounds in the District of Columbia; and that, if the District Commissioners shall decide upon such a course, the Commission of Fine Arts will appoint a sub-committee to confer with them in regard to the matter. (See Exhibit C.)

11. IN RE EXHIBIT AT PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION: Colonel Harts laid before the Commission a letter from the Chairman of the Government Exhibit Board requesting the

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designation by the Commission of an officer to be its representative in matters relating to the proposed Panama-Pacific Exposition to be held at San Francisco in 1915, and requesting a brief statement of the nature, character, and extent of the exhibit which it seems desirable and practicable for the Commission to make. The Commission appointed Colonel Harts to represent it in this matter, and thought it desirable, if proper preparations can be made, to send the original Park Commission Plans, and the Lincoln Memorial Plans prepared by Mr. Henry Bacon. It was also suggested to the Secretary as highly desirable if an exhibit could be prepared illustrating in some graphical way the work and functions of the Commission.

12. BOYCE MANSION IN MONTROSE PARK: The Commission thereupon considered the inquiry of the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds as to whether any money should be spent towards preserving the old Boyce Mansion in Montrose Park. Colonel Harts explained the present dilapidated condition of the house and the probability of not being able to get from Congress an appropriation to repair it; and further suggested that, if any funds would become available, they could be used to better advantage in the embellishment of the grounds. The Commission were of opinion that it is not worth while to spend any money to preserve the house, and advised that it be torn down.

13. ROCK CREEK VALLEY PROJECT: The Secretary next placed before the Commission a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, Chairman of the Commission to acquire land in the valley of Rock Creek between the Zoological and Potomac Parks, transmitting by direction of the President, for any suggestions the Commission of Fine Arts may care to make in the premises, a map of the survey made in accordance with the law by the Surveyor of the District of Columbia of the proposed connection between the Zoological Park and Potomac Park. Mr. H. C. Gauss, Secretary of the Commission to Investigate the Title of the United States to Lands in the District of Columbia, appeared before the Commission informally, and discussed the whole project with the members. In discussing again the question of a viaduct to form part of the connecting link, the Commission stated to Mr. Gauss that they did not advocate a viaduct along the water front as desirable in itself from an artistic standpoint, but had supposed that the ultimate construction of such a viaduct was the only means for securing a park connection between Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park, free from interference with water front traffic; as it had been assumed, from former conference with him, that the commercial use of this portion of the water front must be continued indefinitely. The Commission further stated that, so far as park interests alone were concerned, the Commission would prefer a drive-

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way along the water front on grade without commercial occupation of the land between the drive and the water. The Commission felt that the whole subject at this stage needs a much more careful detailed study from the artistic point of view and the point of view of park development than it is convenient from the Commission to make, and resolved to recommend to the Secretary of the Treasury that the matter of an immediate detailed study of this project be referred to the office of Public Buildings and Grounds under whose jurisdiction the park will undoubtedly be when acquired.

The Commission thereupon adopted the following motions which were to be regarded as expressing the sense of the Commission in the matter:

1. That the Commission recommend that the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds be called into consultation in this matter.
2. That the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds be requested to inform this Commission whether, in his judgment, a roadway at the water level can be substituted for the viaduct.
3. That the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, in its consideration of the subject for recommendation to the Commission of Fine Arts, should not hold itself confined to the definite lines shown on the plat but should advise as to whether it would be better to extend beyond such lines.

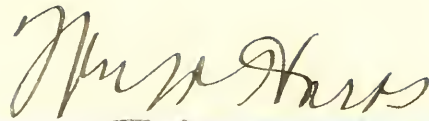
Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Gilbert were thereupon appointed a committee to prepare the reply to the Secretary of the Treasury, and, after a personal examination later in the day of the areas shown on the map, drafted a letter which was forwarded to the Secretary.

(See Exhibit D.)

14. The Commission at 2 o'clock left the office for a short interval for lunch.

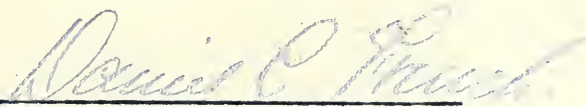
Upon their return Colonel Harts brought up the question of the advisability of calling the attention of the President, either by letter or direct, to the desirability of submitting not only the matters specified in the organic act creating the Commission, but also, all plans for public buildings and parks in the District of Columbia, and all questions involving matters of art which may come under the jurisdiction of the various Federal departmental heads and the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for consideration and report before final action shall be taken. The Commission thought such action very desirable, but suggested that it be taken up verbally with the President by Colonel Harts. This has been done.

15. After some further general discussion of the Rock Creek project, the Commission adjourned at 4:30 p. m., subject to the call of the Chairman.



Colonel, U. S. Army, Secretary.

Approved: _____



Chairman.

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November 22, 1913.

John McElroy, Esq.,
Editor, The National Tribune,
Representing The Meade Memorial Commission)
Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir:

With reference to your letter of November thirteenth last, and your conference with the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting yesterday, regarding a site and the character of a design for the proposed memorial in the city of Washington to General Meade, I am directed by the Commission to inform you that, in their opinion, it would be wise for your Commission not to proceed with determining upon the design for the memorial, or to fix upon its exact location in the territory suggested and favored by your Commission, until the Government has proceeded further in the development of plans for the treatment of that area.

Very truly, yours,

W. W. HARTS

Colonel U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

November 21, 1913.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting today gave careful consideration to the two different designs for the proposed Pennsylvania avenue bridge over Rock Creek, submitted with your letter of November 10, 1913, and believe that, as a scheme, design B is the better. In view, however, of the prominence of this bridge and its close relation to the development of Rock Creek which is now imminent, the Commission consider that the architectural design of this bridge is of very great importance and, while they recognize the excellent engineering features of the design, they beg to suggest that an architect of recognized ability be employed to assist in the designing of the bridge, not merely in matters of detail such as the designing of the balustrades, lamp-posts, and other accessories, but in the actual composition of the bridge as to a study of materials to be used, proportions, and its general form.

By direction of the Commission:

Very truly, yours,

W. W. HARTS

Colonel U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.



November 22, 1913.

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The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

The Commission of Fine Arts acknowledge the receipt of your letter of November 17th, stating that the Commissioners believe that the maximum height which should be established for any building located on the west side of 17th street, northwest, between New York avenue and F street, should be eighty (80) feet above the top of the curb opposite the State, War, and Navy Department building, and requesting the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts in the matter. The views of the Commission of Fine Arts coincide with those of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia in this matter.

The Commission suggest that, inasmuch as the act of Congress, approved June 1, 1910, limiting the height of buildings, provides that on blocks immediately adjacent to public buildings the maximum height shall be regulated by a schedule to be adopted by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, it is the sense of the Commission that it is desirable to prepare a schedule regulating the height of buildings on Pennsylvania avenue, and 15th street, as well as on 17th street, where private buildings are to face public buildings. The Commission believe this is especially desirable in view of the proposed erection of departmental buildings on 15th street south of Pennsylvania avenue. Further, the Commission believe that it would be of advantage, not only to the ~~future~~ appearance of the city but also the real estate interests involved, if such schedules should be worked out for all blocks adjacent to public buildings and grounds in the District of Columbia. If the District Commissioners shall decide upon such a course, the Commission of Fine Arts will appoint a sub-committee to confer with them in regard to the matter.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully,

W. W. HARTS
Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

November 24, 1913.

The Honorable

The Secretary of the Treasury,

Chairman of the Commission to acquire
land in the valley of Rock Creek, between
the Zoological and Potomac Park.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts have examined the map of the survey of the proposed connection between Zoological Park and Potomac Park along Rock Creek, and the copy of a letter of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to you in relation to the same dated November 10, 1913, and, in response to your request conveyed by letter to Colonel Wm. W. Harts, Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, dated November 13, 1913, submit the following comments and suggestions:

We have compared the present survey with the plans for the improvement of Rock Creek upon the Open Valley Plan contained in the report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia dated April 30, 1908 (Senate Document No. 458 - 60th Congress, 1st Session) and have made such examination of the premises as practicable within the time since the receipt of your letter. We concur in the eight numbered suggestions embodied in the letter to you of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia of November 10, 1913, and offer the following additional comments.

In connection with the sixth suggestion concerning changes at Q street, we beg to point out that the condemnation provided for under the Act (Public No. 432, Section 22) and the opening of Q street will radically alter the conditions of use of the remaining property occupied by the street railway company just south of Q street, and that the structures and yards remaining in the possession of the company will be likely to present a very unsightly appearance in connection with the new viaduct and the park improvements; also, that the northeasterly corner of this remaining property, as the limits of the taking are defined on the survey in accordance with the act, come so close to the creek as to make it difficult, if

not impossible, to carry out any satisfactory plan for the construction of drives, walks, and other improvements along the creek. This will be made apparent by a comparison of plans numbered 1 and 2 accompanying the report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia of April 30, 1908, with the present survey at this point. For all of these reasons it seems very important that carefully studied plans for the improvement of the taking line prescribed by Congress in this vicinity should be made as a basis of recommendations for additional legislation, should such be necessary.

We not only concur in the seventh suggestion, that some study and report should be made for a proper terminal for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, but point out that the plan for carrying the proposed park drive across the creek in this vicinity (plan No. 2 accompanying the report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia of April 30, 1908), which appears to have determined the limits of land acquisitions as now defined, is open to serious objection because of awkward alignment and unpleasant relation to the proposed new Pennsylvania avenue bridge; and that a really satisfactory plan for the treatment of this section might indicate the desirability of modifications of the boundary as now defined. There appear to be several other points where the exact lines might advantageously follow existing street or property lines instead of cutting diagonally through lots, as for example at the intersections of Olive street and N street with 27th street, and of L street with 27th street.

We strongly endorse the eighth suggestion as to the desirability of providing for some park connection from 27th streets and G streets to Potomac Park, either along the water's edge or on a viaduct so constructed as to permit the continued commercial use of the water front, and it is our opinion that so far as concerns the beauty and park value of such a connection it would be preferable that it should follow the water front, as it may finally be established, at grade rather than occupy a viaduct with a commercial water front outside of it. Only in case the economic interests of the District imperatively require the continued use of this water front for com-

mercial purposes would it be worth while to consider the viaduct plan.

In view of the foregoing we suggest that plans should be prepared immediately for the development of the proposed connection between Zoological Park and Potomac Park along Rock Creek. This Commission would be pleased to advise concerning such plans from time to time in the course of their preparation.

Very respectfully,

The Commission of Fine Arts,

by

DANIEL C. FRENCH

Chairman.

ABC

125 West 11th street,
New York City.

November 22, 1913.

Hon. Richard Bartholdt,
House of Representatives, U. S.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of November 17 calling my attention to the bill which you have introduced, and of which you enclose a copy, for the erection of a colossal statue of "Peace" on the Panama Canal. I took pleasure in calling attention of The Commission of Fine Arts to your letter at the meeting held in Washington yesterday, when the matter was discussed with great interest. The terms of the organic act creating The Commission of Fine Arts, and defining its functions, are such that it was feared that any action of The Commission endorsing the bill, in advance of its passage, might be considered as exceeding our authority; and I regret therefore that I can not report to you any formal action.

I regret it the more because in asking our counsel you have conformed to a wish which we have frequently expressed, that our advice should be sought in the early stages of any project.

I am instructed to say that The Commission wishes to do everything it can in the matter, and to this end the Chairman or the Secretary will be glad to talk with you informally about it at any time.

Personally, and unofficially, I may say that I can see no reason why such a statue as described in the bill should not find a place somewhere in the canal zone, and add materially to the interest of the canal.

Very respectfully,

Chairman.

